

The Aspiring Leader Program 2000-2001

Leadership Development Academy

An Interagency Development Program
For Federal Employees GS 5-7



The Government's Trainer

Leadership Development Academy

A Letter From the Director of the Aspiring Leader Program

As we approach the 21st century, many of you may be evaluating your skill level and competencies needed to compete and perform in the changing federal workforce. The Aspiring Leader Program can assist you in enhancing your current skills and in developing a wide range of new skills.

I am pleased to inform you that we have designed a curriculum that is challenging and extremely interesting. According to many participants, the ALP has proven to be a life-changing experience. We pride ourselves on having excellent instructors who are experts in their field; bring real world experiences to the classroom; believe wholeheartedly in the mission of the ALP and possess Master's and/or Doctorate degrees. The Aspiring Leader Program is a six-month experiential learning opportunity that not only build skills in a variety of areas but encourages participants to develop a plan for continual learning once they have completed the program.

The Aspiring Leader Program boasts a diverse population of men and women of all ages from over 25 agencies nationwide and as far away as Germany and Japan.

If you are looking for a challenging training program that offers an excellent opportunity for personal growth and development, I invite you to join the Aspiring Leader Program. I promise it will be a "life- changing" and rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Delores Stuckey

Director, Aspiring Leader Program



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"This was the best six months I've ever had. I met diversified, hard-working people from literally all over the United States as well as Puerto Rico and Italy. I wholeheartedly recommend this program."

Ann R. Sotak
Department of Navy
Mechanicsburg, PA

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide quality competency based training for federal employees grades 5-7. This approach helps participants develop skills in areas such as oral and written communication, teamwork, and problem solving. It is the desire of the Aspiring Leader Program to provide a stimulating and challenging learning experience that will aid participants in becoming leaders in their agencies and to meet the many challenges of the changing federal workforce.

The Aspiring Leader Program

Learn Today ... Lead Tomorrow

Are you a motivated self-starter? Does your career plan include leading and working with self-directed teams? If your answer is yes, then the Aspiring Leader Program was created just for you. Under the direction of the Graduate School, USDA's Leadership Development Academy, the Aspiring Leader Program prepares federal employees at the GS 5-7 levels for positions as team leaders, supervisors and managers. The program strengthens basic competencies in managerial skills such as:

- Oral and Written Communication
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Interpersonal Skills
- Self-Direction
- Flexibility
- Customer Service
- Decisiveness
- Technical Competence

"The Aspiring Leader Program has taught me that the sky is the limit and I can do anything and do it well with the right skills. I learned tremendous team building and interpersonal skills from outstanding instructors and a terrific leadership staff. I learned how to demonstrate a proactive approach with all of my official duties and developed the patience to listen when working in teams."

Eleanor L. Wallace
Marine Corps System
Command Office of
Counsel Quantico, VA

Program Design

The Aspiring Leader Program is a six-month program of formal and informal training and requires time and commitment from both participants and their organizations. Participants must be nominated by their first-line supervisor or an appropriate agency official. Participants will be required to be absent from their regular position for approximately 45 days. This requirement should be considered carefully before proceeding with a nomination package.

The Aspiring Leader Program is structured around three, 5-day residential seminars. Each seminar includes a daily classroom schedule and several mandatory evening sessions. In addition, the program contains several developmental work assignments to be completed outside the classroom.

The Aspiring Leader Program is designed around classroom learning and self-study assignments to allow participants to tailor the program to specifically fit their developmental needs. The program provides two main benefits:

1. Participants will acquire the skills needed to work well in a team environment; and
2. Organizations will acquire team-oriented, self-directed staff members.

"The Aspiring Leader Program is a great program! I really enjoyed interacting with the other participants and have established a personal support group with my assigned team members. I have grown personally and professionally. Because of this program I am more confident and clear about my career goals. I am more active on the job and relate better with my co-workers and other vendors."

Charlotte Ring
Marine Corps
Department of Defense
Hopewell, VA

Core Classroom Curriculum

The Aspiring Leader Program's classroom curriculum is divided into three, 5-day residential seminars located within a 200-mile radius of the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Because teamwork is critical to good management, participants are assigned to a Leadership Development Team during their residential sessions. These teams strengthen leadership and interpersonal skills, stimulate commitment to personal development and provide a forum for exploring and addressing current issues facing supervisors and managers in the federal workplace. Each team will prepare and deliver a two-hour presentation on a management-related topic for their class. Additional details for each session follow:

WEEK 1:

Orientation and Skill Building

This session focuses on the participants'

- **Individual Developmental Needs**
- **Self-Direction**
- **Team Building**
- **Leadership Skills**
- **Team Formation**
- **Interpersonal Skills**

Participants are assigned to Leadership Development Teams and begin working on team presentations. In addition, program requirements, policies, expectations and opportunities are outlined.

WEEK 2:

Teams at Work

This session takes place approximately six weeks after the initial session and concentrates on:

- **Team Performance**
- **Conflict Management**
- **Decision Making**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Interpersonal Skills**
- **Customer Service**
- **Diversity and Cultural Awareness in the Workplace**
- **Flexibility**
- **Presentation Skills**

Teams continue working on presentations.

WEEK 3:

Team Presentations, Closeout and Graduation

In this session, emphasis placed on:

- **Oral Communication**
- **Self-Direction**
- **Leadership Skills**

Teams deliver presentations. Participants, supervisors, managers, program coordinators, team advisors and mentors attend a graduation ceremony and luncheon.

"After my 30-day developmental assignment, I've proven to myself and supervisors that I can handle more responsibilities and greater challenges."

Vivian A. Otto
Training Support Center
Ft. Eustis, VA

Other Program Components

Individual Needs Assessment

In order to help customize the program to fit individual needs, each participant will complete the following before attending the initial residential session:

Leadership Effectiveness Inventory to assess competencies and managerial skill level; and

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to facilitate team building exercises.

Leadership Development Plan

Each participant creates a Leadership Development Plan for developmental assignments and independent study activities within his/her agency. This plan acts as the blueprint for his/her developmental program. Participants are also required to prepare a plan for continuous development once they have completed the program. The Aspiring Leader Program will provide a questionnaire to help participants define and meet specific career development objectives. The Aspiring Leader Program Director will counsel each participant on plan design. Participants must coordinate plan preparation with their first-line supervisor and agency program coordinator to ensure appropriate support.

Management Readings

In order to broaden knowledge of the management field and strengthen analytical skills, participants will read and write their reviews of two books on management issues.

Management Interviews

Participants must interview a minimum of three federal managers at the GS 11 - 13 levels. These interviews will provide an additional opportunity for participants to have visibility at the management level and gain critical information for long-term career planning and development.

Shadowing Assignment

In addition to the three residential sessions, the program includes a one-week "shadowing" assignment of a federal manager at the GS 11 -13 levels. Participants will observe a manager in action, focusing on their management style and how they interact with their employees.

30-Day Development Assignment

Participants will complete a 30-day development assignment within their agencies, but outside their position of record. The development assignment does not have to be completed within 30 consecutive days.

Learning Team Activities

Participants are assigned to learning teams during the orientation session. Each team will explore a program-related issue and make a one-hour team presentation of this issue during the final week of the program. This activity is designed to strengthen leadership and interpersonal skills, stimulate commitment to personal development, value and increase the understanding of diversity and provide a forum to explore current issues facing leaders in the federal workplace.

"The Aspiring Leader Program has helped me to set career goals and outline a five-year plan. I recently accepted a one-year position with the same office I used for my 30-day development assignment."

Graylan Quarterman
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Savannah, GA

Nomination Procedure

To be considered for the program, nominations should be sent by the first line supervisor or appropriate agency official to the Aspiring Leader Program office. The package must include:

- A statement written by the first-line supervisor or appropriate agency official assessing the nominee's potential.
- A completed agency training form (DD- 1556) with all necessary signatures.
- A current OF-612, SF- 17 1, or resume signed and dated showing current home address (If selected, all program information will be mailed directly to the nominees home address).
- The name, title, agency mailing address and work telephone number for the first-line supervisor, agency-nominating official and agency program coordinator.

Program nominees are advised that their agency may have different deadline dates and requirements. It is important to check with the agency program coordinator for information.

The Aspiring Leader Program does not accept faxed copies of nomination packages. Nomination packages must be sent by regular mail, Federal Express or UPS to the following address:

**Graduate School, USDA Leadership Development Academy
The Aspiring Leader Program
Attn: Delores Stuckey, Program Director
600 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 330
Washington, DC 20024-2520**

Nomination Acceptance

Qualified nominees will be accepted and placed based upon the date that the Aspiring Leader Program office receives their application. To assure acceptance, agencies should carefully screen applicants and submit nomination packages as soon as possible. If a program fills up before the program acceptance deadline date, every effort will be made to place qualified nominees in the next program session.

Agencies nominating more than one employee should list their nominees in priority order for the preferred program start date.

The composition and the size of each program will be limited to provide for the developmental needs of all participants and to maintain an overall interagency mix within each program. Every effort will be made to accommodate agency preferences for a program start date.

Program nominees, agency program coordinators and first-line supervisors will receive written notification of final selections. Selectees will be notified of training location and hours prior to the orientation start date.

Agencies may apply now for the following sessions:

Program Date

January 23, 2000

May 7, 2000

January 28, 2001

May 6, 2001

Nomination Due

December 1, 1999

April 1, 2000

December 1, 2000

April 1, 2001

Tuition

The tuition for the year 2000 Aspiring Leader Program is \$1,995 per participant. The Graduate School will accept completed agency training forms with all necessary signatures, checks, VISA, Diners Club, MasterCard and American Express. Tuition is billed after the first residential session. Travel and lodging are not included in the tuition. However, lodging costs will be at or below per them rates for the residential training locations.

Meal Policy

The Aspiring Leader Program has altered its Meal Policy for the year 2000 Program. Each participant will be provided breakfast and lunch during the first two residential weeks. Participants and their agencies will be responsible for the cost of dinner. During the Closeout Week, participants and their sponsoring agencies will be responsible for the meal costs for the entire week. (Only the Graduation Luncheon will be provided by the Graduate School.)

Withdrawal Policy

We will accept withdrawals for a full tuition refund at any time prior to the program start date. Substitutions are accepted only if agencies notify the Aspiring Leader Program office prior to the program start date. Tuition, less a \$400 processing fee, will be refunded for withdrawals made up to one week after the program start date. Withdrawals made after the first week will not receive a refund.

For further information, please contact:

Graduate School, USDA

Leadership Development Academy

The Aspiring Leader Program

Attn: Delores Stuckey, Program Director

600 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 330

Washington, DC 20024-2520

(202) 314-3595 or 3580 Fax: (202) 479-6812 or 6814

E-mail: alp@grad.usda.gov Web site: www.grad.usda.gov